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ABSTRACT

The idea of the community college as a second chance or "salvage" institution is discussed in this report. The study explores: (1) how many reverse transfer students (those who transfer from a 4-year to a 2-year institution) are enrolled in community colleges in the United States; (2) problems these students may encounter in transition; and (3) the implications the findings may have for community colleges. The survey showed that 9.44 per cent of the student populations at 46 community colleges affiliated with the American Association of Junior Colleges are reverse transfer students. It is recommended that student personnel and instructional staffs examine their methods for assisting these students and that colleges increase their institutional research in this area. (CA)

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THE TRANSFER OF STUDENTS INTO COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
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INFORMATION

Introduction

Despite the wealth of material concerning students who drop out of four-year colleges and universities, there have been few efforts to trace those students who drop-out and come back to continue their education at two-year colleges. Recent studies by Pervin, Reik, and Dalrymple, (1966), and Eckland (1964) reveal that from twenty to as high as seventy per cent of these students eventually graduate from another institution of higher education.

The need to study, as a separate sub-group, students who transfer back to the community college after attending a four-year college has been given perspective by Eckland (1964). He found that the student who discontinues his education for a time, only to return to the same university or to another college and eventually graduates, differs in many respects from the student who becomes a permanent dropout.

In theory, the basic idea of the community college as a second chance institution is fairly well established. In fact, Cohen (1969), points out that community colleges often take pride that they enroll students who have been unable to continue at four-year colleges. Even though additional attention has been given to the unique role of

the community college in providing another opportunity for the student who has experienced failure in his original college experience, Meadows and Ingle (1967) conclude that research on "reverse articulation" is almost non-existant.

A scruitiny of the literature revealed that there has been a meager attempt to research the phenomenon of the "reverse transfer student". The studies that were isolated were either institutional, relating to a single community college or studies concerned with reverse articulation at the state level. There were no studies that attempted to determine, on a national basis, the extent to which the "reverse transfer student" is present on the community college campus. The presence of these students in large numbers may have implications for instructional and student personnel services. If "reverse transfers" account for a relatively small proportion of the community college enrollment, this will also hold implications for community college personnel and may suggest that the "salvage" or second chance" function is more of a conjecture than a reality.

Statement of Problem

Specifically, this study will explore: (1) the extent to which the reverse transfer student is enrolled in selected community colleges in the United States; (2) problems the student may encounter in the transition from four-year colleges to community colleges; and (3) what implications the findings may have for community colleges.

Procedural Methods of the Study

The survey was limited to community colleges who were members of the American Association of Junior Colleges. A number was assigned to each member community college. As a method of choosing the sample of sixty (60) community colleges, a random number table was utilized.

A cover letter (see appendix A) explaining the purpose of the investigation, along with a questionnaire (see appendix B) was mailed to the Dean of Student Personnel Services at each of the sixty (60) institutions. Of 60 questionnaires mailed, 46, or about 77 per cent, were returned with sufficiently complete information to warrant inclusion in the analysis.

For the purposes of this study, the reverse transfer student was defined as: any student (full or part-time), presently attending a community college, who had his last record of academic work (before attending the community college) at a baccalaureate granting college.

Summary of Significant Findings

The following were among the principle findings:

1. The student headcount at the 46 participating institutions amounted to 170,456. The number of reverse transfer students included in this student headcount totaled 16,089 (9.44 per cent).

2. The vast majority (44 of 46 community colleges) would admit a student who was on academic probation at the previously attended baccalaureate granting institution. In

a similar fashion (38 of 44 community colleges) stated that their institution would admit an individual who had been academically dismissed from the previous institution. Although the student would usually be admitted by the community colleges if he had been dismissed or been on probation at the baccalaureate granting institution, the majority of community colleges indicated that these students would be placed on probation at the community college.

3. Institutional records relative to reverse transfers were not readily available (27 of the 46 participating community colleges)--59 per cent--indicated that reverse transfers were not identified in terms of how many and who these reverse transfers were that attended the community college.

4. Only 10 of the 46 community colleges (22 per cent) indicated that their institution offered special orientation and guidance services to reverse transfers.

5. Institutional research was viewed as being quite weak by those individuals who completed the questionnaire.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It would seem that from the results of this survey, the following conclusions and recommendations would be appropriate:

1. Due to the large number of reverse transfer students attending community colleges, perhaps the student personnel staff should take a hard look at their methods and techniques for assisting these students. Articulation with the institution the student previously attended and with student as he enters

the community college is certainly appropriate for a community college that claims to be "student centered". Orientation programs designed especially for these students, using both an individual and group approach can be excellent tools for use in assisting in the salvation of the reverse transfer student.

2. Community colleges are providing many students with a second chance to further their education. The institutional average of 9.44 per cent cited earlier, is an excellent indication that one of the functions of the community college is that of "salvage" of students who discontinue their attendance at a four-year college or university.

3. Community colleges showed a lack of institutional research. It is apparent that if community colleges are to serve their student body in an optimum manner, they must understand the characteristics of the students who attend the institution.

Thus, from the information gathered by this survey it appears the "salvage function" of the community (junior) college is a reality in terms of the large number of students attending who are classified as reverse transfers. However, there are strong indications that improvement is needed in the methods employed to assist students in adjusting to the community college environment and in the student's re-evaluation of his goals and self-concept.

APPENDIX A

University of Southern Mississippi
Southern Station, Box 12
Hattiesburg, Mississippi
39401

College of Education and Psychology
Department of Guidance

Your community college has been selected as a participant in a nationwide study of student mobility from baccalaureate granting institutions to community colleges.

As you realize, most mobility studies deal with the 3rd and 4th year student–especially those students who transfer from a community college to a baccalaureate granting institution. Little research has been conducted on the "reverse transfer student", i. e. the student who leaves the baccalaureate institution to attend the community college.

In an attempt to determine the extent to which this type of student is present in American community colleges, the attached instrument has been devised. The form has been structured so that you can complete it in a minimal amount of time.

When responding to the questions, please keep in mind that a "reverse transfer student" may be defined as that student (full or part-time) presently attending your community college, who had his last record of academic work at a baccalaureate granting institution.

Thank you for your prompt attention. Will you please direct the attached form to that person at your institution who can most easily complete and return the instrument. We hope the results of this study will shed more light on the community college as a "second chance" institution. If your community college would like a copy of the completed study, please specify this on the enclosed reply sheet.

Yours truly,

Jack L. Daniels, Assoc. Prof.
Department of Guidance

APPENDIX B

DIRECTIONS: Please complete this form by filling in your responses to the questions on this sheet.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE
STUDENT MOBILITY STUDY

1970

DEFINITION OF REVERSE TRANSFER STUDENT–Any student (full or part-time), presently attending your community college, who had his last record of academic work (before attending your community college) at a baccalaureate granting college.

PLEASE MARK YOUR ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS EITHER ON THE LINE PROVIDED OR BY MARKING THE APPROPRIATE BOX

1. _____. As a respondent, what is your position at the community college?

2. _____. What is the full-time-equivalent (F.T.E.) student enrollement at your community college? _____ What is the student Headcount?

3. _____. What is the number of students presently enrolled that can be classified as "reverse transfer"?

4. ☐ Yes ☐ No May a student "reverse transfer" to your community college who has on academic probation at the previously attended baccalaureate granting institution?

5. ☐ Yes ☐ No May a student "reverse transfer" to your institution even though he has been academically dismissed from the previously attended baccalaureate granting institution?

6. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes If your answer was yes to either 4 and/or 5, is the student placed on academic probation at your community college?

7. If you checked sometimes to question 6, please Explain. _____

_____

_____

_____

8. ☐ Yes ☐ No Are reverse transfer students identified at your community college, i. e. did you have tabulated information already available as to how many and who the reverse transfers were at your institution before completing this form?

9. ☐ Yes ☐ No Does your community college offer special orientation, guidance services, etc. to reverse transfers?

10. ☐ Yes ☑ No In your opinion, does your community college engage in adequate institutional research?

11. ☐ Yes ☐ No Does your institution employ a director of institutional research?

12. ☐ Yes ☐ No If you answered No to question 11, is there one individual who has been designated to have responsibility in this area.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO:

Dr. Jack L. Daniels, Associate Professor, Department of Guidance, Southern Station, Box 12, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39401.

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